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Chairman: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 145: Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (A/60/646, A/60/728 and A/60/869)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/60/646) and the budget for the Mission for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/60/728), said that, against an appropriation of $379 million, total expenditure for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for the 2004/05 period had amounted to $377.2 million. The resulting unencumbered balance of $1.8 million, equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the appropriation, was attributable to lower emplacement travel costs for military contingents and a reduced number of rotation trips; lower staff costs, owing to the incumbency of international posts at lower grades than budgeted and the fact that almost all incumbents were Mission appointees; and lower utilization of helicopters because of the delays in deploying troops. Those savings had been partially offset by higher freight costs, owing to the airlifting of equipment for formed police units; lower than budgeted vacancy rates for civilian police; and an increase in the rate of mission subsistence allowance.

2. In the light of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/255 concerning liabilities and funding for after-service health insurance benefits, the proposal contained in the performance report regarding the action to be taken by the General Assembly required modification. Accordingly, the draft resolution on the financing of MINUSTAH would reflect the credit to Member States of the unencumbered balance of $1.8 million and other income in the amount of $4.8 million, in a manner to be determined by the General Assembly.

3. The budget for MINUSTAH for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/60/728) was estimated at $490.6 million, representing a decrease of $25.9 million, or 5 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2005/06. The decrease reflected lower ration costs; the absence of a provision for the deployment of contingent-owned equipment, owing to the projected completion of deployment in 2005/06; and reduced requirements under facilities and infrastructure, due to the projected completion of all major projects for the establishment, renovation and upgrading of accommodation facilities, seaport jetties and landing fields in 2005/06.

4. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly were described in paragraph 36 of the report. However, in the light of the provisions of resolution 60/255 concerning liabilities and funding for after-service health insurance benefits, the draft resolution on MINUSTAH would reflect the exclusion from the amount to be appropriated for the maintenance of the Mission for 2006/07 of a related provision included under common staff costs and equivalent to 4 per cent of total net salaries.

5. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)), introducing the related report of ACABQ (A/60/869), said that the Advisory Committee was recommending a reduction of $385,300 in the budget for MINUSTAH for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The reduction related to the Advisory Committee's recommendations on posts and consultants. In that connection, the Advisory Committee noted that the Mission continued to review post requirements and that in the budget estimates for 2006/07, the abolition of one P-4 post was proposed. It welcomed those efforts and trusted that post requirements and grades would be kept under review so as to achieve further economies.

6. The Advisory Committee recommended in paragraph 41 that interpreters should be recruited as national staff, the associated costs being significantly lower than the costs for outsourced interpreters. It further recommended approval of a request for five additional staff to provide administrative support for the new interpreter posts.

7. The Advisory Committee had previously recommended that the Administration should reduce travel costs in 2005/06. It therefore regretted the Mission's projected budget overrun during the current period and trusted that the proposed travel budget for 2006/07 would be utilized prudently and not exceeded.

8. The Advisory Committee recognized the importance of multimedia centres and the indispensability of information technology as a means of communication, particularly in unstable situations. However, it trusted that, in establishing the 10 centres proposed, the Mission would proceed on the basis of

functional requirements. It expected that updated information in that regard would be provided in the 2007/08 budget submission.

9. The Advisory Committee noted with concern that the Mission continued to resort to consultancy services for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), although 56 posts had been made available to it for such activities. The work of the DDR programme had been focused on the preparation of studies and the establishment of a platform for future operational activities. The Advisory Committee had received no convincing information that such work could not be done by existing staff with relevant expertise. It therefore did not recommend approval of resources for consultants for the purpose of DDR.

10. **Mr. Davis** (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the countries members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that they welcomed the return of constitutional rule to Haiti, as demonstrated by the recent election of a president and parliamentary representatives in the course of a free and fair electoral process. They also looked forward to Haiti's renewed participation in the Community's councils.

11. The road ahead would be long and difficult for Haiti. While the primary responsibility for building democracy and creating the conditions for sustainable social, political and economic development lay with the Government and people of Haiti, long-term international support would also be of critical importance. In that connection, CARICOM welcomed the practical support provided by MINUSTAH and urged its continuation, noting that the Mission's presence had been a key factor in the stabilization of the security environment and in the success of the recent elections.

12. With regard to the budget for MINUSTAH for 2006/07, the Mission was to be commended for its positive follow-up to the requests and recommendations of the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee. He noted with satisfaction that the Mission was continuing to review its staffing requirements with a view to ensuring a larger proportion of national staff. Vocational training provided to national staff made an important contribution to building long-term capacity, and the Mission should pursue its efforts in that area. Further information should be provided concerning the Mission's continued use of consultancy services for DDR and its intention to extend the duration of its responsibility for quick-impact projects. CARICOM supported the establishment of a United Nations radio station in Haiti. It also fully supported the efforts to build a permanent national election capacity.

13. A new dawn of hope had risen in Haiti, and the opportunity must not be squandered. It was important for the people of Haiti and the regional and international communities to coordinate their respective roles and inputs. Facilitating the integration of Haiti in the Caribbean Community was a priority for the countries for which he spoke. Their contribution to the efforts to assist Haiti would be constrained only by their limited resources, for there was no shortage of political will.

14. **Mr. Torres Lépori** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Bahamas on behalf of the countries members of CARICOM and expressed the hope that the relations between Haiti and CARICOM would be promptly re-established. Regrettably, documentation in Spanish had not been available in sufficient time for delegations to study it. The Rio Group would therefore await the Committee's next meeting to make a more detailed statement on the item.

Agenda item 151: Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (A/60/626, A/60/726 and Corr.1 and A/60/868)

15. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the performance report on the budget of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/60/626) and the budget for the Mission for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/60/726), said that $222 million had been appropriated for the maintenance of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) for 2004/05. Total expenditure for the same period had amounted to $218.8 million, resulting in an unencumbered balance of $3.2 million, equivalent to 1.5 per cent of the resources appropriated. The unencumbered balance was primarily attributable to delays in the deployment of contingent-owned equipment. The savings had been partially offset by additional requirements for the acquisition of prefabricated units for accommodation and airfield facilities, owing to the lack of existing infrastructure, and by the need to acquire generators, on account of the unavailability of local electricity supply.

16. As in the case of MINUSTAH, in the light of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 60/255 concerning liabilities and funding for after-service health insurance benefits, the proposal contained in the performance report regarding the action to be taken by the General Assembly required modification. Accordingly, the draft resolution on the financing of UNMIS would reflect the credit to Member States, in a manner to be determined by the General Assembly, of a total net amount of $2.8 million, comprising the unencumbered balance of $3.2 million and net losses of $0.4 million.

17. The budget for UNMIS for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/60/726 and Corr.1) was estimated at $1,081.7 million, which represented an increase of $112.2 million, or 11.6 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2005/06. The increase was attributable to the full deployment of international and national staff approved in the 2005/06 period, together with the phased deployment of the 83 additional international and 652 additional national posts proposed in the budget submission; the full deployment of military observers, military contingents and police personnel authorized in 2005/06; and increased provision for DDR. The increase was partially offset by reduced requirements under facilities and infrastructure, reflecting zero provision for the rental of tented camps for military personnel; reduced requirements for vehicle acquisition, major acquisitions having been carried out in 2005/06; and lower costs for aviation fuel.

18. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly were described in paragraph 38 of the report. However, in the light of the provisions of resolution 60/255 concerning liabilities and funding for after-service health insurance benefits, the draft resolution on UNMIS would reflect the exclusion from the amount to be appropriated for the maintenance of the Mission for 2006/07 of a related provision included under common staff costs and equivalent to 4 per cent of total net salaries.

19. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of ACABQ (A/60/868), said that the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $594,300 in the budget for UNMIS for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The reduction related to the Advisory Committee's recommendations on posts.

20. The Advisory Committee had been informed that, depending on the decision that the Security Council might take in that regard, the costs for financing UNMIS for 2006/07 might be reviewed, in which case revised estimates would be submitted for consideration by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly. It was to be hoped that any such estimates would be submitted expeditiously.

21. The Advisory Committee trusted that, as the Mission moved into the second year of its mandate, the budget assumptions would be improved to reflect lessons learned from its operation. Lastly, it welcomed the proposal to use river transportation, which was significantly cheaper than air transport and constituted a more effective means of transport in view of the lack of road infrastructure in southern Sudan, in particular.

22. **Mr. Stone** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, welcomed the progress made in the region with the signing of the Abuja Peace Agreement and the subsequent dispatch of a United Nations technical assessment mission to Darfur. If a revised budget was required for the Mission, the Secretariat should draw on the experience gained over the past year during the initial set-up phase of UNMIS in preparing the budget estimates. In addition, the possible expansion of the Mission should be taken into account when recruitment and management decisions were made.

23. The size of the budget for UNMIS reflected the Mission's scope and complexity. The three delegations were grateful to the Administration for the detailed budget submission and to the Advisory Committee for its thorough analysis and recommendations, which they generally supported. The Mission was expected to be of a long-term nature, and it was therefore important to ensure the full integration of all United Nations actors in the Sudan. In that connection, the three delegations welcomed the progress made in implementing a unified workplan and the information provided in the budget submission regarding the respective roles of UNMIS and the various United Nations agencies. They encouraged the Secretary-General to continue to pursue the concept of integrated mission partnerships and to finalize the relevant policies and guidelines.

24. The three delegations welcomed the implementation in UNMIS of a results-based budgeting database, which should facilitate the recording by programme managers of progress made on

performance. Given the scale of the Mission, it was essential to establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability, so as to ensure that UNMIS could fulfil its mandate efficiently and effectively.

25. The difficulties experienced by the Mission in the timely recruitment of both national and international staff were cause for concern. The three delegations supported the use of national staff in peacekeeping missions, where possible, since it played an important role in capacity-building and in the transfer of skills to local populations. They would be interested to hear about strategies to improve recruitment processes and looked forward to a significant reduction in vacancy rates.

26. The savings achieved through the use of river transportation were most welcome. The Mission should continue to explore alternatives to air transport with a view to ensuring the most efficient use of resources. The possibility of sharing aircraft with other missions in the region should also be examined.

27. Lastly, the three delegations pledged to ensure that UNMIS had the necessary resources and structures to meet its objectives.

28. **Mr. Traystman** (United States of America) commended the Mission for its efforts thus far and acknowledged the considerable challenges that lay ahead for it. In that context, there was a need for strong leadership in UNMIS and for continued dialogue with other partners working in the Sudan. Given the size of UNMIS and its decentralized structure, his delegation would appreciate additional information on reporting and lines of communication in the Mission. In particular, it wished to know what value the proposed Field Office Liaison Cell would add to the Mission and how communication was currently facilitated. It would also welcome further details on the role of the proposed Strategic Planning Office, the functions of which appeared to duplicate those of the senior management team.

29. While many of the operational costs had decreased as expected following the initial set-up phase, the Mission was nevertheless to be commended for its continued efforts to find efficiencies. He noted, by way of example, the use of river transportation to move contingent-owned and other equipment.

30. His delegation applauded the Mission's efforts to coordinate with other United Nations entities in the Sudan and urged it to avoid duplication of effort. In that connection, it requested the Secretariat to provide a clear breakdown of the Mission's role and activities in relation to those of other United Nations system entities, indicating whether the budget reflected that division of labour. Lastly, where the DDR process was concerned, UNMIS appeared to be undertaking activities normally carried out by humanitarian agencies. His delegation would welcome clarification in that regard.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.